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## The teaching and learning of English yes/no-question pronunciation at secondary school

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## **The teaching and learning of English yes/no-question pronunciation at secondary school**

**L'enseignement et l'apprentissage de la prononciation de l'anglais oui / non-question à l'école secondaire**

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### **Abstract**

*The Congolese national syllabus includes the teaching of pronunciation contents among which yes-no questions. However, the prominence on task-based approach which highlights final exams and gives priority to grammar, reading comprehension, and composition activities when pronunciation is a poor parent. This article aims to promote the teaching of English pronunciation contents taking Yes-No question teaching as a case study. It has been carried out through a fieldwork framework implying the use of questionnaire to teachers of English at secondary school. This study follows the method developed by the proponents of the 3Ps model (Presentation-Practice-Production) which is operationalised through a lesson plan elucidating the different teaching strategies relevant for the implementation of the teaching of pronunciation contents at secondary school. This article has provided didactic procedures for the teaching and learning of English yes/no-question sentence stress driving data from the class of Première. This questionnaire output shows that teachers of English are unable to teach the prosodic features of Yes-no question because they have not been trained to teach English pronunciation contents during their training period at the teachers training college. Finally, this work shows that it is possible to teach, learn and assess the English sentence stress thanks*

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*to the teaching strategies elaborated in a lesson plan suggested to help both teachers and learners face this item in classes.*

**Keywords:** Teaching/ learning/yes/ no-question, sentence stress, English, secondary school.

### Résumé

*Le programme national congolais comprend l'enseignement des contenus notionnels de la prononciation parmi lesquels des questions fermées. Cependant, l'importance accordée à l'approche par tâches qui met en évidence les examens finaux et donne la priorité aux activités de grammaire, de compréhension de texte et de composition tandis que la prononciation est négligée. Cet article vise à promouvoir l'enseignement de la prononciation anglaise en prenant l'enseignement des questions fermées comme une étude de cas. Cette étude est un travail de terrain impliquant l'utilisation d'un questionnaire destiné aux professeurs d'anglais du secondaire. Cette étude suit la méthode développée par les promoteurs du modèle 3Ps (Présentation-Pratique-Production) qui est opérationnalisée à travers un plan de cours élucidant les différentes stratégies d'enseignement pertinentes pour la mise en œuvre de l'enseignement des contenus de prononciation au secondaire. Il ressort du questionnaire que les professeurs d'anglais sont incapables d'enseigner les caractéristiques prosodiques de la question fermée parce qu'ils n'ont pas été formés pour enseigner les contenus de prononciation anglaise pendant leur période de formation à l'Ecole Normale Supérieure. Enfin, ce travail montre qu'il est possible d'enseigner, d'apprendre et d'évaluer l'accent de la phrase anglaise grâce aux stratégies pédagogiques élaborées dans un plan de cours proposé pour aider les enseignants et les apprenants à faire face à cet item en classe.*

**Mots clés :** enseignement/apprentissage, questions fermées, intonation de la phrase.

## Introduction

This work aims at enlightening the relevance of teaching and learning English sentence stress at secondary school. In fact, it is important to remember that English sentence stress deals with the stress of statements and questions. Talking about interrogative sentence stress, we are going to emphasize on yes/no-question stress in the class of Première<sup>4</sup> at Savorgnan de Brazza high school. Previous studies in English teaching in the Republic of Congo have paved the way scrutinizing different aspects of English pronunciation (Ndongo Ibara 2015, 2016, Ondze Otouba 2015, 2016, 2019, Lamy Nkoukou 2017, Ossere MOUNGUELLET 2019). It is quite clear that the main purpose of teaching and learning English language at secondary school is to communicate. Otherwise, it is obvious to mention that the teaching of pronunciation items plays a significant role in order to motivate the secondary school learners to have an effective communication in English. In so doing, the main interest in this article is to highlight the readers that “*yes/no-question stress*” lays emphasis on the pronunciation of words and group of words by respecting the intonation patterns. This teaching item helps learners stress yes/no-question sentences accordingly while communicating in classrooms or out of the school environment. To achieve this successfully, we are going to focus on observation, questionnaire and interview methods in order to answer the following questions: (I) why teachers and learners do not cope with this pronunciation item in English course? (II) How to teach, learn and assess «*yes/no-question stress*” in the class of Première? In fact, this article is structured in three parts: relevance of teaching English sentence stress, discussion and major findings and, teaching and learning *yes/no-question sentence stress*.

### The relevance of teaching English sentence stress

This section aims at showing the importance of teaching and learning English sentence stress at secondary school. In fact, this importance can be seen at two different levels. At the level of

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<sup>4</sup> Première is the equivalent of the English Lower Sixth Form or Eleventh grade

teachers, the English sentence stress helps teachers of English to improve their training in order to be more creative in terms of the teaching methodology and the pronunciation of English sentences. At the level of learners, the English sentence stress will boost the secondary school learners to focus their attention on the oral study while learning English and overcome the different hindrances that hamper them to get an effective intonation of English statements and questions. Thus, Szwedek (1986:11) thinks that no one can speak a language without uttering sentences: *No utterance can be delivered without sentence stress as one of its components and a change in position of sentence stress invariably brings about a change in the meaning of the utterance.* It is evident that no communication is possible without uttering a sentence. Thus, we should know how to pronounce sentences that we utter in order to clarify the message we want to convey or to avoid being misunderstood or misinterpreted during the oral conversation. Therefore, sentence stress is one of the basic notions that must be studied deeply so as to motivate the secondary school learners speak English accurately. From this, we may understand that without stressing the right words in a sentence, the speech will be confusing. Therefore, it is up to teachers of English to teach this issue in order to help learners be effective during their oral production. In so doing, the teaching and learning of sentences stress at secondary school should be permanent in order to get learners well prepared to provide the intelligible utterances. Talking about the impact of stress in English, Ladefoged (1993:249) writes, “stress is a force employed in uttering a syllable, or words within a sentence”. This means that, in polysyllabic words, the syllables are not pronounced with the same degree as well as words are not uttered with the same energy in sentences. Thus, we can distinguish two kinds of stress in English language: word stress and sentence stress.

The term “words stress” implies the stress of syllables within English words. In addition, it refers to the study or the identification of the most outstanding syllable within a word. In the teaching process, this concept stands for showing the stressed and the unstressed syllables when dealing with the pronunciation of English words in isolation or in a speech. In fact, the process of working with “word stress” needs some rules and guidelines in order to help both teachers and learners face this English language item. To illustrate, the use of different grammatical categories, the morphology and syntax of the selected words should be taken into account during the teaching process. Chen et al. (1996:5) demonstrates in the following chart that word stress can be studied within the frame of syllables and the characteristics of stressed and unstressed syllables:

	<b>loudness</b>	<b>length</b>		<b>pitch</b>
		Vowel length	Vowel clarity	
<b>Stressed syllable</b>	loud	long	full	high
<b>Unstressed syllable</b>	quiet	short	reduced	low

*Table 1. Characteristics of word stress*

The analysis of the above table shows the difference between a stressed syllable and an unstressed one. In fact, Chen et al highlight that the difference between the stressed syllable and the unstressed one is illustrated through the following characteristics: the loudness, the length and the pitch. These characteristics enlighten that the stressed syllable is loud, high and its vowel is long and full whereas, the unstressed syllable is quiet and low and its vowel is short and reduced.

The term “sentence stress” refers to the use of word stress within a sentence. That is, the action of stress is always emphasized on syllables of words in sentences. From this, we may

understand that before dealing with sentence stress it is quite important to master word stress first. Talking about the importance of word stress in the teaching process of sentence stress, Roach (2000:70) writes, “stress of the words in a sequence or in connected speech depends on their relative importance in a sentence.” It is obvious that the more important the words are, the stronger they are heard in a sentence. This means that when uttering a sentence, the speaker selects some words which are very important in order to convey a message or to make his audience understand or depict the delivered message. These words are called the content words. In addition, the term “sentence stress” is used to signal things like new information, contrasting information, and transitions (changes of topic) in sentences. Accordingly, words which are usually stressed in English emphatic speech belong to content words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs...) and those which are usually unstressed belong to lexical words, (auxiliaries, modal verbs, prepositions, monosyllabic conjunctions, articles, personal pronouns, and possessive pronouns; except some absolute ones: mine, hers...).

Considering this simple sentence: I am *reading* a *novel*. In this sentence, there are two content words (*reading* and *novel*). These words are stressed because they carry the meaning of that sentence. Thus, they are heard louder when uttering the sentence. However, it is necessary to point out that any word in a sentence can be logically stressed if it implies special emphasis or contrast as in the same sentence (*I am reading a novel*). Here, the personal pronoun “I” which is a function or lexical word can be stressed to show that the speaker is reading a novel but others are not. This expresses a contrast or an emphasis on a word to mean something more important while uttering a group of words. In this regard, it is better to ask two fundamental questions when dealing with the

sentence stress: **(I)** what is the sentence about? **(II)** What are the words related to the content of the sentence?

The above two questions will help both teachers and learners depict the message conveyed in a given sentence thanks to the identification of the most important words within a sentence during the teaching and learning process.

### **Data collection Method**

This section aims at providing the three principal tools such as the pilot study, the questions to teachers and learners to get more information concerning the existence of the English sentence stress in the syllabus, its teaching and learning process in the class of Première at secondary school.

### **Pilot study**

This pilot study aimed at checking and observing both teachers and learners in terms of teaching and learning English sentence stress in the classrooms. Actually, these classroom observations aim at checking if pronunciation aspects are taught in these classes. This is to say, we want to know if teachers are capable of providing teaching strategies and learning activities in order to encourage the secondary learners to learn the English pronunciation items such as sentence stress based on yes/no questions. In fact, the result of these classroom observations reveal that teachers give more importance to grammar and reading comprehension lessons to prepare learners facing exams. In addition, our investigations mention that in the teachers' previous lesson plan and learners' copybooks, no teaching and learning items related to English sentence stress have been taught and learnt before our observation period at Lycée Savorgnan De Brazza 'A'. This means that teachers do not teach pronunciation as a separate lesson with appropriate strategies the way they do with reading comprehension for example. Whereas, the analysis of the INRAP<sup>5</sup> English syllabus in the class of Première unveils that the English sentence stress is included and requested to be

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<sup>5</sup>INRAP : Institut National de Recherches et d'Actions Pédagogiques (National Institute for Research and Pedagogical Actions)



taught, learnt and assessed. This signifies that this language item is well-mentioned in the English syllabus of INRAP (2002: 9) as follows:

(General objective (G.O) 2: expressing oneself orally/ Specific objective (S.O) 2.2: produce a message respecting prosody word/sentence stress, tones, and intonation in connected speech),

(General objective 3: Expressing oneself orally/Specific objective 3.5: reproducing accents/ word stress, expressive reading, word stress, tones and intonations),

### Questions to teachers

The questions to teachers are linked to the teachers' place of training, teaching experience, and the different strategies and activities they use to deal with English in general, and the difficulties they encounter while teaching English sentence stress at secondary school. In addition to that, we have dealt with indirect interview to collect more information. It covers questions which are based on the importance of sounds and stress teaching in the English course and their teaching cards in the class of Premiere at secondary school. The following are the two selected questions to teachers:

- *Have you been trained to teach English sentence stress?*
- *Does INRAP organize workshop on teaching English sentence stress aspects?*

### Questions to learners

The questions to learners are concerned with the learners' attitude towards the English language, their learning background, and the difficulties they encounter when dealing with English sentence

stress or pronunciation in classes. The following are the two selected questions to learners:

- *Which lesson are you more interested while learning English?*
- *Do your teachers encourage you to learn English yes/no-question stress?*

**Discussion and major findings**

This section aims at discussing the results issued from the pilot study, the interviews to teachers, and the teachers and learners questionnaires in the class of Première at Lycée Savorgnan De Brazza ‘A’. As a result, the major findings related to the teaching and learning of English yes/no-question stress in the class of Première unveil that the first problem that blocks the teaching of English suffix stress is that teachers have not been trained how to teach English sentence stress items at secondary school. In fact, the following table illustrates how the sample teachers mention that they have not been trained to teach the selected item during their training.

<b>Have you been trained to teach sentence stress at secondary school?</b>		
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Yes	00	0%
No	10	100%
Total	10	100%

**Table 2.** Teachers training background

Obviously, this table describes that no teacher has been trained to teach sentence stress at secondary school. In fact, teachers of English mention that the course of English sentence stress they learnt during their training period was not focused on didactic procedure in order to prepare the prospective teachers to face its teaching items at secondary school. That is what Haycraft focuses on when analysing the teaching and learning of

English language at school. He thinks that English pronunciation remains a big challenge in schools to the extent that teachers of English do not pay so much attention to its items during the English teaching and learning process. Analysing the teachers' attitudes toward this language item, Haycraft (1978:55) writes, "Pronunciation is probably the most neglected aspect of English language teaching. Foreign teachers often lack confidence to teach it methodically and English teachers sometimes have a complex about it."

This quotation unveils that pronunciation teaching in general and sentence stress teaching and learning in particular is the most neglected aspect of English language teaching since it is hardly taught at school. In fact, Haycraft considers that teachers are unable to deal with pronunciation items at school because of lack of confidence. The term "*lack of confidence*" refers to lack of teachers training concerning this issue. Thus, for him, foreign teachers of English are not well trained to deal with this English language item. That is the reason why he raises the notion of "*complex about pronunciation*" teaching in general and that of sentence stress teaching and learning in particular. Otherwise, we may understand that teachers of English are afraid of teaching pronunciation aspects at secondary school because they have still some problems related to the lack of teaching strategies and learning activities likely to help them grasp these issues. That is why Haycraft mentions the teachers' problem related to methodology. Here the author thinks that teachers of English do not know the way in which pronunciation in general and sentence stress in particular should be taught. However, it is important to underline that the English pronunciation items are mentioned in the English syllabus book of INRAP and requested to be taught, learnt and assessed as well as other issues of English course at secondary school. Thus, insisting on pronunciation teaching at

secondary school, Haycraft (Ibid.) writes “The teaching of pronunciation should be part of any course. Students are concerned about it as they are with any aspect of learning English”. The analysis of this quotation reveals that Haycraft insists on pronunciation teaching and learning at secondary school. In fact, the author suggests that pronunciation should be taught like other items of English. Thus the term “pronunciation should be part of any courses” means that pronunciation teaching should be permanent at school, no matter the course the teacher deals with. This is to say that pronunciation teaching should be the priority for any teacher of English at secondary school.

It appears that the study of the pronunciation’s items plays a pivotal role in the teaching and learning English as a foreign language at the secondary school. Hence, Robert Carmen (2010:24) writes that pronunciation lessons should be taught at the beginning of the teaching and learning process in order to help learners build new habits in English: “If you don’t know to pronounce and yet you pronounce your own way at the beginning of your learning, then you are building your habits in the wrong way. Learning words without pronunciation on the first lesson is damaging”. Carmen demonstrates that teaching a language without starting by its pronunciation’s lessons is a failure. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers of English to consider this English language item at secondary school. Elsewhere, the following question aims at checking if the secondary school teachers teach English yes/no-question stress in Première class:

<b>Do you teach English yes/no-question stress</b>		
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Yes	02	20%
No	08	80%
Total	10	100%

**Table 3.** *Teaching yes/no question stress*

The table shows that the majority of teachers do not teach English sentence stress based on yes/no-questions at secondary school. In fact, these teachers unveil that this pronunciation item is written in the syllabus book of INRAP, but they really do not know how to provide teaching strategies and learning activities on it in a lesson plan as they do with other teaching issues of English language. Otherwise, they are not motivated to deal with English yes/no-question stress when teaching English language at Lycée level even though very few of them enlighten that while teaching grammar they explain English yes/no questions stress by pronouncing these kinds of sentences and ask learners to repeat loudly by respecting the rising intonation.

Actually, it is important to signify that teachers of English are passive and limited to what they already know about teaching of English items such as grammar and Reading comprehension lessons. They are not creative and they just consider what they teach every time to prepare the secondary school learners to face exams. In this connection, they are unable to create suitable teaching strategies and learning activities in order to prepare learners deal with English items that can boost the latter to communicate orally in the target language.

Insisting on the role of sentence stress teaching and learning, Kelly (2008) thinks that this language item is crucial for the comprehension and interpretation of the message. This aims at providing learners with some information in order to help them decode English messages as well as speak accurately. Thus, he writes, "*sentence stress has an essential role in expressing and understanding intended messages in long utterances and closely interrelated with intonation.*" In fact, it is clear that sentence stress is the key notion in expressing and understanding messages. Thus, the mastery of this notion could help grasp the spoken level of the English language. Accordingly, the teacher of English once

again should consider this aspect so as to prepare learners be accustomed to the English sounds, stress and intonation. In the same perspectives, Nambiar (2009) analyses the English sentence stress at the level of “*strong and weak forms*” when teaching and learning English yes/no-question stress when he writes:

Learning to use the weak forms of structure words is a major step that learners must take in order to feel comfortable with spoken English. Without using them appropriately, it is difficult to sound natural when one speaks English in an international context. (Nambiar, 2009, p.91)

Here, Nambiar puts the English language in terms of international context, and the one who wants to be familiar with this context should first learn to use the weak form of structure words in a connected speech sentence. Therefore, sentence stress teaching and learning item at secondary school is compulsory for both the teacher and learners in order to use them appropriately during communication. The last following question is related to the learners’ motivation on learning English sentence stress based on yes/no-question by their teachers:

<b>Do your teachers encourage you to learn English yes/no-question?</b>		
<b>Responses</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentages</b>
Yes	10	20%
No	40	80%
Total	50	100%

**Table 4.** *Learning yes/no-question stress*

Evidently, the majority of learners argue that teachers of English do not encourage them to learn English sentence stress based on yes/no-question. They explain that teachers encourage learners to repeat everything when dealing with written activities related to grammar, language functions and vocabulary lessons.

In addition to that, these learners justify that teachers of English encourage them to join English clubs, listen to BBC broadcast in order to improve their pronunciation and their speaking abilities.

In this regard, we should mention that teachers of English are unable to create activities to encourage learners to learn English sentence stress based on yes/no-question. They just do it theoretically, but they do not dramatize their speech to demonstrate that it is possible to learn sentence stress based on yes/no-question stress with pedagogical procedures as they do with other issues. However, during seminars or workshops, the focus is put on items related to exams such as reading comprehension, grammar... That is to say, inspectors from INRAP do not care about the use of the English language by learners in oral communication. The priority is items based on exams and classwork. This means that their main objective is just to prepare learners for exams but not to help them communicate in English. This hampers them to go beyond their limits by creating strategies and searching for other procedures in order to deal with the selected item. Emphasizing on the importance of pronunciation, Pourhosein enlightens that the study of English sounds is the best way to help learners mastering the pronunciation of English words both in isolation and in sentences:

*If learners want to change the way of pronouncing English words, they have to change the way they think about the sounds of those words. This is true for both individual sounds and the bigger parts of the speech such as a syllable, stress patterns, and rhythm.*

*(Pourhosein, 2016, p.1)*

In fact, Pourhosein's analysis depicts that the teaching of English pronunciation items helps learners get more information about the English sounds and stress systems. Next, it encourages them to

improve their ways of pronouncing or stressing words in isolation or in sentences and to know the difference between the varieties of English spoken all over the world and the British English Received Pronunciation. Thereby, learners become autonomous while dealing with English pronunciation either written or orally. For this reason, Peter Roach (2009: 6) argues that:

*No pronunciation course that I know has ever said that learners must try to speak perfect RP ; to claim this mixes up models with goals: the model chosen is RP but the goal is normally to develop the learners' pronunciation sufficiently to permit effective communication with native speakers. (Peter, Roach, 2009,p.6)*

Peter Roach wants to demonstrate that regardless from where the learners are coming from and what accents they use, by learning English sounds, they will not be having difficulties in pronouncing English words. Thus, this course will give them the correct pronunciation of words by distinguishing British from American English too. Otherwise, Roach encourages teachers of English not to wait for good conditions in classrooms to deal with sentence stress teaching, but to adapt themselves to the current environment as they do with other English issues at secondary school.

### **Teaching and learning yes/no-question stress**

This section aims at showing the way the lesson of English yes/no-question stress should be taught, learnt and assessed through the method of 3Ps (Presentation, Practice and Production) in the classroom.

First, the teacher should refer to the pre-requisites questions related to the different question category. Here, he/she asks learners to provide the different types of questions they know.



After this, he selects one question category to deal with (yes/no-question).

Secondly, the teacher explains the difference between stress and intonation. Then, he provides conditions to use stress in yes/no question sentences through examples. At this level, learners observe and follow attentively the explanations of the teacher.

Next, the teacher asks learners to repeat the provided examples after him and to give their own examples orally based on the different conditions he has provided. Here learners participate and may ask questions if they do not understand quite well. They write their own sentences on the board and pronounce them accordingly under the guidance of the teacher.

Finally, the teacher provides two sorts of exercises to check if the learners have understood the taught lesson: the applied exercise and the follow up activity.

In fact, the applied exercise is done in the class to reinforce the learners' knowledge about the taught lesson, whereas the follow up activity is a set of exercises that learners are requested to do at home.

Concerning the selected lesson of this article, in the applied exercise, the teacher provides *yes/no question sentences* with the stress patterns and asks learners to say True or False if the selected sentences are well stressed. In the follow - up activity, the teacher asks learners to make five yes/no question sentences and stress them accordingly.

**Level:** Première  
**Subject:** English  
**Matter:** Pronunciation  
**Title of the lesson:** yes/no question stress  
**G.O.2:** Expressing oneself orally  
**S.O.2.3:** Articulating language sentence stress  
**Teacher:** Frayvon Kédi Kélélé

**Date:** Tuesday September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2019  
**Duration:** 55 min  
**Reference book:** Speaking accurately. A course in International communication by K.C. Nambiar

Performance objective	Teaching strategies	Learning activities	Evaluation	Timing	Observation
	<b>I. Beginning</b> <b>1.Warming up</b> Good morning class What is the date of today?	Good morning sir Today is Tuesday, September 2 <sup>nd</sup> 2019 <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Answers</b></p> 1-Wh questions	<b>Task 1:</b> Provide different types of questions in English	<b>5 min</b>	

<p>By the end of the lesson, learners should be able to provide the stress patterns of yes/no questions based on the teacher's explanations.</p>	<p><b>2.Pre requisites</b> The teacher asks learners to provide types questions The teacher selects yes/no questions and asks learners to provide some examples.</p> <p><b>Day's lesson</b> Today, the lesson is about yes/no question stress.</p> <p><b>1-Presentation</b> . The teacher provides conditions and examples related to yes /no question stress. *Yes/ no question have a rising intonation. <b>This intonation can cover one or more words:</b></p>	<p>2-Yes no questions 3-Tag questions</p> <p><b>Answers</b></p> <p>1- Were you at school yesterday? 2- Do you have something to tell me? 3- Will you come with me? 4- Would you like some coffee? 5- Can you ring the bell? 6- May I call you Patrick? 7- Have you been to London?</p>	<p><b>Task 2:</b> Provide some examples of yes/no question sentences.</p>	<p><b>20min</b></p>	
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	<p>1- Have you finished your work?                  2- Did you meet her yesterday?                  - If the speaker' intention falls on a person or thing in yes/no-question sentence, the subject is stressed.                  1- Did they pass their exam?                  2- Will he marry her soon?                  -If the speaker' intention falls on the action, the verb that follows the auxiliary is stressed.                  1- Would you lend me your pen?                  2- Could you ring the boss now?</p> <p><b>2-Practice</b>                  The teacher asks learners to pronounce the above examples after him and asks them to provide their own examples orally.</p>	<p>Learners follow attentively the explanations of the teachers based on the examples and the conditions he has provided</p> <p>Learners pronounce the above examples and provide their own sentences orally.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Answers</b></p> <p>1- Do you speak English?                  2- Are they sleeping now?</p>			
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	<p><b>3-Production</b> The teacher asks learners to write their own examples on the board and pronounce them by respecting the stress pattern.</p> <p>The teacher asks learners to copy the lesson in their copybooks.</p> <p><b>4-Evaluation</b> <b>Applied exercise</b> The teacher asks learners to say true or false if the following yes/no</p>	<p>3- Is <u>J</u>ohn <u>w</u>orking <u>n</u>ow?</p> <p>4- <u>H</u>ave <u>y</u>ou <u>s</u>een <u>t</u>his <u>m</u>ovie <u>b</u>efore?</p> <p>Learners copy the lesson in their copybooks</p> <p><b>Answers</b></p> <p>1- True 2- False 3- False 4- False</p>	<p><b>Task 3:</b> Repeat the above examples after me and provide your own examples orally</p> <p><b>Task 4:</b> Write your own examples on the board and pronounce them by respecting the stress pattern</p> <p><b>Task 5:</b> Copy the lesson in your copybooks.</p>	<p><b>15 min</b></p>	
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	<p>question sentences are well stressed.</p> <p><b>Follow up activities</b> The teacher asks learners to make five yes/no question sentences and stress them accordingly.</p>		<p><b>Task 6:</b> True or False: Say if the following yes/no question sentences are well stressed.</p> <p>1- Is English difficult?</p> <p>2- Will you come tomorrow?</p> <p>3- Have you got a pen?</p>	<p><b>10 min</b></p>	
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			4- Can they win the match today? <b>Task 7:</b> Make five yes/no question sentences and stress them accordingly.		
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## CONCLUSION

This article has been an attempt on the teaching, learning and assessing of English sentence stress based on yes/no question category. It enquires about the different obstacles that hamper both the secondary school teachers and learners to deal with this issue in the class of Première at SAVORGNAN DE BRAZZA high school in Brazzaville (Congo).

In fact, this work unveils, firstly, that teachers of English lack information concerning the didactics strategies of pronunciation teaching in terms of sentence stress based on yes/no question. That is to say, they were not trained in how to teach this issue at secondary school during their training period at the Teacher Training College.

Secondly, the inspectors from INRAP do not encourage teachers to deal with sentence stress teaching and learning based on yes/no question. They do not organize workshop related to the teaching and learning of this language item. It seems that they do not take into account the teaching and learning of English sentence stress based on yes/no question, although the notion is written in INRAP's English syllabus book: (G.O.2: Expressing oneself orally/S.O.2.2: produce a message respecting prosody: word/sentence stress, tones and intonation in connected speech). Consequently, the teaching and learning of English sentence stress based on yes/no-question remains a waste of time since the selected English teaching and learning items are essentially focused on writing in order to prepare the secondary school learners to face both formative and summative assessments.

Finally, this research paper shows that it is possible to deal successfully with English sentence stress based on yes/no questions. In fact, it suggests teachers to consider this issue as a teaching item which encourages the secondary school learners to be familiar with the spoken English. Therefore, it provides both the teaching and learning strategies by using the 3Ps cycle as a



methodology so that English yes/no-question stress should be taught, learnt and assessed successfully like other issues in junior and senior secondary schools. A lesson plan has been for that purpose and stands as a step forward in teaching and learning processes.

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